REMARKS

Claims 1-6, as amended, remain herein.

Applicants appreciate the statements in the Office Action that claims 2-4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the independent claims from which they depend.

Claim 1 has been further amended to recite causing a plasma discharge by applying a high frequency voltage through the mounting unit. See applicants' Fig. 1, showing power supply 12 connected directly to mounting unit 6. Claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 1. Additional minor edits have been made to claims 1-5. Claim 6 has been added, corresponding to claim 5 but depending from claim 2.

1. Claims 1 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Yoshida et al. U.S. Patent 5,536,364.

The presently claimed plasma-processing method includes generating plasma by feeding plasma-generating gas comprising fluorine-containing gas into a process chamber and causing a plasma discharge by applying a high frequency voltage across a volume of gas within the process chamber between an electrode of the mounting unit and a grounded electrode. This arrangement is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited reference.

The Office Action cites Yoshida '364 for allegedly disclosing etching a substrate with a gas containing SF6 in a plasma at a temperature of 40 degrees C or higher. However, Yoshida '354 discloses a plasma processing apparatus known as a "anode-coupled type etching apparatus," as described at Yoshida '354, column 4, line 29, in which a plasma discharge is caused by applying a high frequency voltage to an electrode facing a grounded mounting unit having a substrate mounted thereon. This is completely different from the presently claimed invention, because instead of applying voltage to an electrode facing a grounded mounting unit, the presently claimed invention generates plasma by applying voltage across a volume of gas within the chamber between an electrode of the mounting unit and

a grounded electrode. As such, the presently claimed apparatus is known as a "cathode-coupled type etching apparatus."

Yoshida '364, column 4, lines 34-39, states that the "cathode-coupled etching" is not suitable to obtain a smooth surface of a substrate. Yoshida '364 says:

> Because the energy of the ion-assist effect in the anode-coupled type etching according to the present invention is not as high as that in cathode-coupled etching when the same electric power is applied, damage to the etching substrate, and thus the surface roughness, are reduced.

Accordingly, Yoshida '364 not only does not disclose the cathode-coupled etching method recited in applicants' claim 1, but also teaches a person skilled in the art away from use of applicants' cathode-coupled etching, in favor of anode-coupling etching (applying voltage to an electrode facing the grounded mounting unit) as a preferred method for achieving a smooth, etched surface.

For the foregoing reasons, Yoshida '364 fails to disclose all elements of applicants' claimed invention, and therefore is not a proper basis for rejection under §102. And, there is no disclosure or teaching in Yoshida '364 that would have suggested

the desirability of modifying any portions thereof effectively to anticipate or suggest applicants' presently claimed invention. Claim 5, which depends from claim 1, is allowable for the same reasons described herein for claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

All claims 1-6 are now proper in form and patentably distinguished over all grounds of rejection stated in the Office Action. Accordingly, allowance of all claims 1-6 is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the applicants would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone applicants' undersigned representatives.

Respectfully submitted,

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